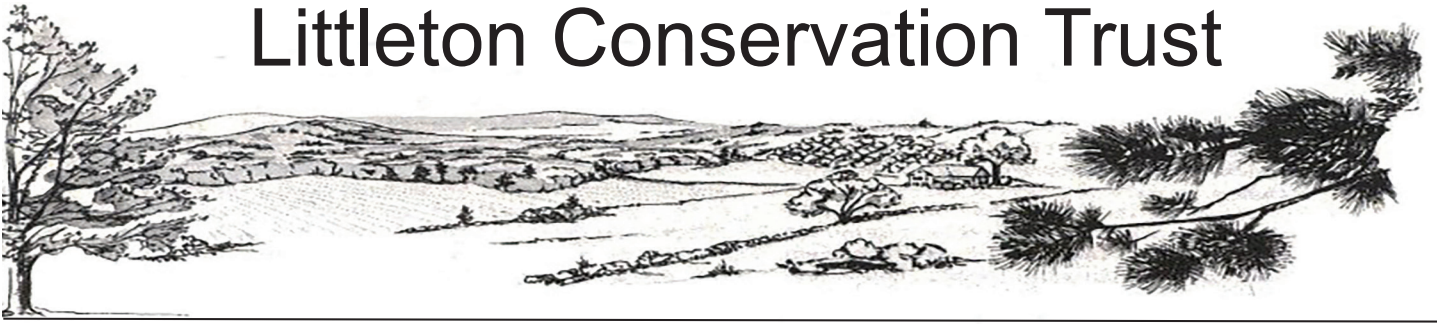


Littleton Conservation Trust



Newsletter

Spring 2024

The Importance of Land Acquisition for Littleton

Peaceful forests and open spaces filled with natural beauty allow us to restore ourselves and gain a sense of wellbeing. These places are also essential for wildlife to prosper, and help to restore our environment from the climate challenges we are facing. They have what is called “conservation value” because among many other positive attributes, they help maintain vital ecosystems, produce clean air for us to breathe, and help protect our drinking water supplies. Some of these spaces in Littleton also protect important Native American sacred sites, helping to preserve the long and rich history of our town and spiritual connections to the earth. (See article by Dan Boudillion on page 3.)

As a town facing development pressures like many others, Littleton needs to continue its commitment to acquiring and preserving land for many generations to come. These efforts can take time, sometimes years, to successfully complete. For instance, the planning and approval process that resulted in preserving the Cobb conservation area off Nashoba Road and its beautiful pond took almost a decade to complete. By protecting the conserved area around Cobb Pond, which has a drinking water source beneath it, the Littleton Water Department will be able to use that fresh water in the future to support our growing town. This is only possible because the land around the pond will be kept in its natural state.

Additionally, the protection of the adjoining Yapp conservation area a few years after the Cobb land was preserved created a beautiful wooded 100-acre nature preserve with numerous unique natural features and connecting trails for all to explore and enjoy. These kinds of trail connections between lands can be linked together to create safe corridors used by people and wildlife that help avoid the

danger of roads. LCT has worked for many years to bring into existence a network of linked trails throughout Littleton in partnership with the Town. The long-term goal is the ability to walk, hike or (on some trails) ride a bicycle long distances across town to help reduce traffic, keeping our air cleaner and our bodies and minds more fit.



These are only a few examples of the natural riches we get to cherish and enjoy when we protect land from development.

The volunteers of Littleton Conservation Trust, in cooperation with the Town, are always seeking to save new, undeveloped parcels that have good conservation values. In addition to gifts of land from generous and far-sighted land owners, a very important component of successful conservation purchases by the town is you, the people of Littleton. Those folks who advocate for additional natural resources being set aside for the future, take time out of their busy lives to attend town meetings, and cast their votes in support are a key factor in this effort. The conservation process takes time, but the results are very rewarding for us all.

As part of our quest to continue preserving properties, LCT recently created a special fund, our Land Acquisition Fund (LAF). The LAF is dedicated to providing financial support to pay for some of the essential “background” work of acquiring land, like appraisals

and surveys, for future land purchases by the Town. Last fall LCT held a kick-off fundraiser and matched the designated donations from many generous donors. Through that initial effort, the LAF already has well over \$40,000 in it. We hope to continue growing this fund so we have money available to help when potential town land purchase opportunities arise. Anyone wishing to donate to the LAF can do so on the donation slip in our newsletters, or donate online. Any size donation is greatly appreciated!



**LCT
Board of Trustees
Spring 2024**

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Alyssa Russell

32 Dogwood Rd. 978-844-0376

Volunteers

Scott Lewis Webmaster

Karen O'Neil Facebook Administrator

Jim O'Neil Trail Crew Coordinator

Online

Website:

LittletonConservationTrust.org

Trail Maps:

LittletonConservationTrust.org/trail-guide

Facebook:

facebook.com/LittletonConservationTrust

The Littleton Conservation Trust (LCT), distinct from the Town's Conservation Commission, is a private land trust that was formed in 1962 to promote Littleton's rural character; to preserve its water, plant, and wildlife resources and unique views; and to provide environmental education. The LCT is caretaker of over 300 acres of property (gifted by far-sighted residents) on which we manage a public trails system.

Littleton Conservation Trust Contacts

- ➔ **Jim O'Neil, Trail Crew Coordinator**, maintains a trail worker email distribution list. When work projects are planned, notifications and updates are distributed to its member list. Email JFOneil63@verizon.net
- ➔ **Littleton Trails**, a Facebook group, is an interactive site to share stories, photos, and observations of Littleton's conservation lands and area wildlife. See facebook.com/groups/639049749490984
- ➔ **LCT Walks** will be announced and updated on the Littleton Conservation Trust website, listed in the Littleton Conservation Trust events calendar, and automatically sent to the Littleton Conservation Trust email list. Sign up at LittletonConservationTrust.org/contact-us/subscribe/

**UPCOMING
Activities (A), Walks (W), Outdoor Events (O)**

Date	Time	Event Description
5/5/24	2 PM to 4 PM	Hero walk. (O). Location: Yapp Conservation Land. Erin Jade will lead the group to Fort Rock to share a story of Jadev Payang before walking back.
5/11/24	7 AM to 11AM	Global Big Day for Birding (O). Location TBD. Please keep an eye out on Littleton Trails Facebook and the LCT website for more information.
6/22-6/28/24	Dawn to Dusk	Story Walk at Whitetail Woods. Book is a surprise!!
8/17/24	TBD	Kayaking on Long Lake. The time will probably be in the morning. Look at website for more information. (O)
9/17/24	7 PM, Moonrise	We are going to try for a moon walk at Cloverdale. September 17 is a supermoon. Obviously, it is hard to know whether the weather will cooperate. Look on website for more info as time nears.

Look for more information about these events and others at LittletonConservationTrust.org

Fireflies Need You!

Fireflies are in trouble and you can help them:

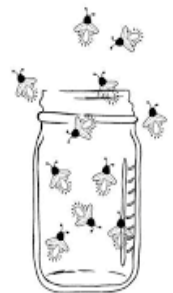
Turn off outdoor lights (or put in motion sensors)

Let part of your yard "go wild"
(<https://www.firefly.org/>)

Participate in No Mow May
(beecityusa.org/no-mow-may)

Avoid pesticide use
(<https://xerces.org/endangered-species/fireflies/how-you-can-help>)

Be sure to see the gallery of firefly photos at RHL in August!



**Can You Guess Where
This Photo Was Taken?**

(Look for the answer at the bottom of page 5.)



Littleton Conservation Trust Membership and Donation Form — Spring 2024

New Renewal Gift Membership Donation

Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Name: _____

(Your date designates tax deduction year.)

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Please provide an email address to receive notification of upcoming walks and conservation-related events.

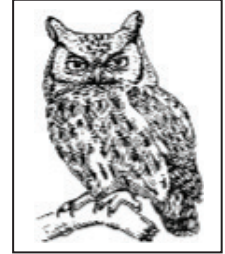
Checks should be made out to the "Littleton Conservation Trust" or just "LCT."

For donations under \$1,000, we also accept credit card payments online at: littletonconservationtrust.org/donate

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual: \$25 | <input type="checkbox"/> Family: \$40 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friend: \$100 | <input type="checkbox"/> Supporter: \$250 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patron: \$500 | <input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor: \$1,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: \$ _____ | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gift to Land Acquisition Fund: \$ _____ | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Please send me information on preserving my own land. | |

Please send form to:

Christine Nordhaus, Treasurer
Littleton Conservation Trust
P.O. Box 594
Littleton, MA 01460



Prayers in Stone: Native Sacred Sites in Littleton

© Daniel V. Boudillion 2024

Littleton was originally the Praying Indian Plantation of Nashobah, and prior to that, part of a much larger gore of land under Chief Tahattawan called Nashope. In 1654, Tahattawan chose to have the Plantation here, although it was not an ideal location – close to Concord as it was – but because it would help preserve the sacred sites of his people.

For the most part, many of these sites are still here, hidden away, asleep for the last 300 years. But with the return of the Nashobah Praying Indians, led by Sagamore Strong Bear Medicine – who lives in Nashobah again as did his ancestors before him – that which was asleep is reawakening under the medicine-walk of his moccasins.

This is good medicine, indeed. Not only for the Nashobah, but for all people of good heart who live here and walk the woodlands. There is Manitou – Spirit – here again.

What may have seemed only a few years ago but an unusual pile of stones, is with deeper understanding a place of medicine built by Native hands well before the colonials arrived. What may have seemed but an unusual wedged rock of no account, is with new eyes – when you let the landscape speak – a place where Spirit moves between worlds, according to tribal lore.



Walk softly if you walk among the stones. Treat them with respect, treat them with honor. I am careful not to touch them, just to look quietly and experience the spirit of the place. They are prayers in stone.

There are many such prayers in stone in Littleton, tucked away in the woods. Most are on Conservation Trust and Town land. As such, this fragile Native spiritual heritage is preserved. It is up to us Littletonians, and our brothers and sisters of the Nashobah, to keep them preserved.

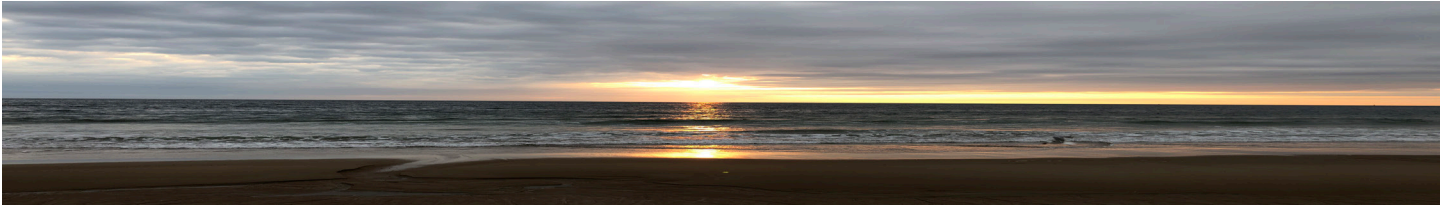
Some of these sites are on the Webster property in Littleton, a hidden woodland that may be coming up for sale to the town in May, and one more good reason to preserve this place of beauty, nature, and spirit.

As you walk the land, knowing what you know now, walk with a sense of spirit being alive in all things, not just the Native stone sites.

As Native lore says, its not just a thing here or there that is sacred, it is all the world, all of nature – all of us – and every bit we conserve for future generations is good for all who make their lives here.

Visit “Our Time on Earth,” an Extraordinary Exhibit at the Peabody Essex Museum

by Erin Jade



“Humans are not the protagonists of this planet’s story,” writes John Green, author of *The Anthropocene Reviewed*, recommended by a friend when I described visiting the climate exhibit at the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem. “If there is a main character,” he continues, “it is life itself, which makes of earth and starlight something more than earth and starlight. But in the age of the Anthropocene, humans tend to believe, despite all available evidence, that the world is here for our benefit.”

The centering of human-species within the ecology at large with its themes of dominion and extraction has led us here: living in a changing climate with negative aftermath. Adapting will demand fresh perspectives on how we interact with life around us and ask that we employ our most unique and redeeming qualities including innovation by way of art, design and engineering.

Creative and divergent thinking alone will not change our conduct however, because it must be coupled with a critical examination of western culture’s relationship to the natural world. These are the overarching themes of the multi-media London-produced traveling exhibit **Our Time On Earth at Peabody Essex Museum** in Salem, MA. This exhibit is available through June 9th and features artists, scientists, and designers from twelve countries who have contributed to eighteen installations and digital works.

There are futuristic 3-D models featuring equitable ways to share resources and exhibits on sustainable materials for housing and clothing composed of mycelium and other renewable resources. An interactive augmented-reality piece links to an app that animates photographs of ocean plankton which scientists attribute to generating half of the earth’s oxygen. The whimsical photographs of individuals dressed in natural materials by artist duo Riita Ikonen and Caroline Hjorth is a project dedicated to “a continual search for modern human’s belonging to nature.”

A film of a post-apocalyptic city flooded by rising sea levels and re-wilded by foxes and chickens plays on a loop behind a wooden banquet table: “Refuge for Resurgence” invites us to imagine equity around a table of fellow animals, set with found-object utensils and plates each painted with a different wild creature.

One of our most problematic beliefs is that we are superior to animals, a key theme in Melanie Challenger’s book *How To Be Animal*: she writes: “In our layered experience of the world, it’s possible to believe we have left behind

the blunt realities of being animal. Human life may be a blend of biology and dreams, but these dreams are still animal dreams...how do we stop the use of biological traits as the basis for how we treat one another?”

“Imagine a world in which indigenous innovation engineers the future...” A key message of the exhibit asks us to consider, “Western-led solutions to the climate emergency continue to focus on future-oriented colonial technologies. Traditional peoples’ hundreds or sometimes thousands of years of traditional ecological wisdom is often considered primitive and ignored...indigenous knowledge benefits the design of contemporary environments.” One of many painted cloth banners hanging from the ceiling says, “we the native peoples represent 5% of the world population, however our way of life protects 82% of the world’s biodiversity.” Could we consider shifting purposefully into a new epoch: from Anthropocene, in which human impact looms, to the Symbiocene where we exist in balance with other life forms?

Robin Wall Kimmerer, in *Braiding Sweetgrass*, scrutinizes the English language and its influences on our relationship with the natural world—specifically the use of “it” pronouns for any life form not human. “Objectification of the natural world,” she writes, “reinforces the notion that our species is somehow more deserving of the gifts of the world than the other 8.7 million species with whom we share the planet. Using ‘it’ absolves us of moral responsibility and opens the door to exploitation....in Anishinaabe and many other indigenous languages, it’s impossible to speak of Sugar Maple as ‘it.’...other species are recognized not only as persons, but as teachers who can inspire how we might live. We can learn a new solar economy from plants, medicines from mycelia, and architecture from ants. By learning from other species, we might even learn humility.”

This is an important exhibit the whole family can enjoy. Consider also, how time outdoors, especially with our children, is a way to connect with our family at large. Under wide sky and trees, along brooks, amidst shy salamanders and wood ducks, we have a chance for humility and for awe, both vital as we navigate this tenuous time on our planet.

Exhibit at Peabody Essex Museum

Salem, Massachusetts

On View Through June 9, 2024

<https://www.pem.org/visit>

Future of Littleton's Orchard

by Kristen Kazokas

The Town owned Morrison-Nagog Hill Orchard sits quiet, a bit disheveled, a bit wild as its future is decided. Since 2020 a search for a new tenant to manage the Orchard has been unsuccessful. Selling the property is now being pursued. Citizens of Littleton will be casting votes on this at Town Meeting May 7. Public input is also needed for the writing of the Request for Proposal (RFP), the formal outline of criteria to which potential buyers will respond.

The Nagog Hill Orchard Ad Hoc Working Group (OWG) has been given the task of charting a plan for the Orchard by the Town Select Board. 48.67 acres of the 94.41 original acres of the Orchard have a Commonwealth of Massachusetts Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR). This land along with a barn and house (55 +/- acres total) is what the OWG recommends be sold with additional restrictions. The remaining parcels and structures may be available for lease, as noted in the February 2024 Request for Information (RFI).

This will free the Town of financial and ownership responsibilities, but it is important for all of us to consider the decision of the sale carefully since the burden of regret will last for generations. This agricultural land is situated in and among conservation land and protected water that thread the beauty of nature into the story of our town and into our lives.

Traveling along the designated historical scenic roads with stone walls and views of fields, you can catch a moonrise or sunset in the open sky, see a hawk perched on an ancient oak tree, or hope for a glimpse of a Bald Eagle or a deer or two. The wooded landscape of the Sarah Doublet Forest & Nature Reserve (SDFNR) is ever present, connecting us to Native American history and our rural agricultural roots while providing sanctuary as the town grows.

Apple trees have been charting the rhythm of the seasons in Littleton as far back to Chief Tahattawan's Praying Indian Plantation of Nashobah. Now the trees of the last Orchard are "fallow and cannot be revived" (Appraisal pg 2). A series of choices and events over the last 24 years has led us to where we have to accept the loss of the Orchard as it once was.

The "primary intent" of APR is to "perpetually protect and preserve agricultural lands. . . ." It also "is intended to regulate and control activities and/or uses which may be . . . detrimental to water conservation, soil conservation, or to

good agriculture and/or forestry management practices or which may be wasteful of the natural resources . . ." (APR pg 1). The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) strengthens the APR by requiring management "with a conservation plan . . ." and monitoring compliance (APR pg 25). The restrictions also include exceptions, variances, and permits.



Agricultural practices that take care of the land allow it to support healthy farms, families, and communities. Before the Town purchase, the Morrison family chose to protect the ecology by using interactive pest management methods in their operation of the Orchard.

Further back in history, the Nashobah Praying Indians lived and farmed on Nagog Hill honoring their interconnectedness with Earth through their farming practices, as did their ancestors. Evidence of these traditions exists today in SDFNR, bringing the past

into our present. We, as a community, which includes Nashobah Praying Indians of today, can choose how that gets carried into the future.

Determining the criteria used to evaluate potential bidders and their plans is a critical step in writing the Request for Proposal (RFP). You can still make a difference by informing yourself and attending meetings. It is important that all interested citizens voice what matters before the RFP is finalized. We are deciding the future of this unique landscape and the stories it will create.

WANT MORE INFORMATION? LOOK HERE!

- *Go to the town website to find open meetings: Orchard Working Group (OWG) & Select Board*
 - Determine criteria for the RFP
 - Write RFP to sell property with restrictions
 - Accepting & evaluating RFP submittals
 - OWG recommendations to Select Board
 - Vote on purchaser (Select Board/Town Meeting - TBD)
- *www.littleton.org/933/Nagog-Hill-Orchard-Ad-Hoc-Working-Group*
 - Documents: ARP, Appraisal, Monitoring Reports, RFI
 - Meeting Minutes, Agendas & Calendar
 - Dec 2023 Presentation, April 25 Public Input for RFP
 - Maps: USDA, RFI pg 8-11, Appraisal pg 24-29

Answer to page 2 photo location: Oak Hill, looking down the hill at Lookout rock.

Spring 2024

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Littleton, MA 01460
Permit #6

Littleton
Conservation
Trust



P.O. Box 594
Littleton, MA 01460

*"Preserving Our Rural Landscape"
for 60 Years*

Postal Patron
Littleton, Massachusetts 01460

Town Meeting May 7, 2024

Please consider attending Town Meeting on May 7 to hear about and vote on articles that are important to how our community is developing. We, the people, are what makes this community a special place to live and work.



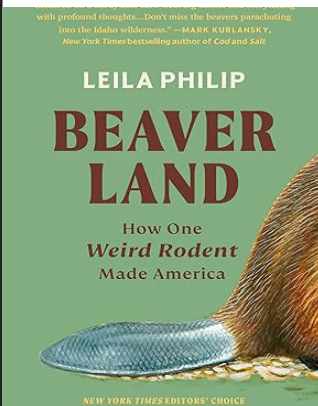
This newsletter is printed on recycled post-consumer waste.

Media Corner

LCT donated books can be found at the Reuben Hoar Library.

Are you seeing beaver activity in your neighborhood this spring? Here are two recent books about beavers and their building projects.

Beaverland: How One Weird Rodent Made America by Leila Philip, 2022



Beaverland dives deep into the history humans share with beavers, including early native American culture; European colonization and the fur trade; and the industrial revolution, when New England became the most dammed patch of ground on the Earth. Beavers once flourished from Canada and Alaska to the Gulf of Mexico, from the Pacific coast to the Atlantic, and also on the European continent. Although humans all but exterminated them, recent interest in their ability to sequester water in

the landscape, is helping beavers make a comeback. This book is a compelling read!

Eager: The Surprising, Secret Life of Beavers and Why They Matter by Ben Goldfarb, 2018

Eager is a highly entertaining read that focuses on the remarkable natural history of beavers. An ancient, mega-faunal North American beaver was the size of a bear! The origin of their burrows, huge fossilized helical towers, remained a mystery for years. The towers can still be seen in some public lands - read the book to find out where. "Eager" is a real page-turner.

It is full of delightful anecdotes about modern-day beavers and the sometimes-eccentric folks who are compelled to learn all they can about these landscape engineers. Beavers are the only creatures aside from humans that make landscape-scale modifications to their environment.

